

# *Sketch*

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## Half-Abandoned

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# Half-Abandoned

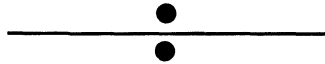
By Maurice Kirby

(Apologies to Browning)

**T**HROUGH the sunset-burnished prairie red and gold,  
Very old,  
Lies the half-abandoned right-of-way where rails—  
Iron trails—  
That are rusted, crooked, faltering, were so straight,  
Were so great.  
Slender, singing copper trolley, strung so tight,  
Worn so bright,  
Followed every rolling mile, then, of the steel  
Where the wheel  
Of swift caravans of commerce clicked along  
With a song.

**I**NTERURBANS to the city every hour  
On the hour,  
Parlor cars with purring motors, very fast,  
Built to last,  
Trains that ran a mile a minute all the way—  
So they say—  
You could see them come, half-hidden by the corn,  
Hear their horn,  
Feel the tremble as they passed you, roaring down  
To the town.  
Catch the haunting, lingering echo of the bell  
As it fell.  
Limiteds, expresses, locals—fewer—one—  
Finally none.  
Now—the trolley sags, and scrawny, rotting poles  
Stand like ghouls  
By the old, grass-hidden siding to the mill  
Oh, so still

Where a patient, lonely freight car waits at rest,  
 Looking west.  
 And the small, red country station 'round the bend  
 Nears the end  
 Of its days beside the railway. Lovers talk  
 As they walk  
 Down the quiet grade, half lost in amourettes—  
 Silhouettes  
 Dusking softly into twilight as the sun  
 Ends his run.



## Return to Me

By Elizabeth Foster

**R**ETURN to me, dear one, some day  
 When you have tried your fragile wings;  
 Come back to me to nurse your stings  
 You may receive in some rough fray.  
 I let you go. You've stayed away.  
 Regret your broken promise brings.  
 Return to me, dear one, some day  
 When you have tried your fragile wings.

Of course it's not for me to say  
 What you should do; some say, "He flings  
 Her heart away." My love just brings  
 Me memories. And so I pray  
 Return to me, dear one, some day.